

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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April 21, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Administrator, AID
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Expansion of RD Cadre Program in Vietnam

Attached is a proposal informally given to me by our Saigon Mission. Ambassador Porter and I felt we should short-circuit the usual procedures and prepare the way in this manner, because of the urgent need for quick USG decision if action is to be completed in 1966.

The proposed doubling of the cadre program is one of the programs which Porter and I believe should stand at the top of our non-military priority list in Vietnam. Despite certain weaknesses the cadres are the best technique we've developed yet for the pacification of the countryside behind the shield of US/ARVN military forces. But at the present rate of cadre output, pacification will continue to lag behind our military capability.

Porter recommends rapid construction of a new training center to enable an increase in the annual training rate from 19,000 to 39,000 per year by the end of CY 1966.

To do so, it will be necessary that

A. We give this program manpower priority for recruitment, if necessary at the expense of the Popular Forces. MACV may have some reservations, but I gather that the Washington sense of priorities is clear.

B. CIA continue as supervisory, control, and planning agency because of the urgency of the matter. We can't afford to change horses in midstream.

State Department, NSC reviews completed

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SECRET

2

C. USG agencies, and this probably means largely the military, make available promptly to CIA any personnel and material needed for the new training center, particularly a Seabee unit and shipping facilities.

Given the high priority of this program, I would appreciate your reactions and if possible agreement in principle as soon as feasible. Could I ask for a reply by 26 April.



R. W. Kommer
Special Assistant
to the President

cc: Messrs. Vance
Gaud

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MEMORANDUM

April 6, 1966

To: Robert W. Komer,
Special Assistant to the President.

From: William J. Porter, *WD*
Deputy Ambassador, Republic of Viet-Nam.

Subject: Proposal for Rapid Increase in Number of Revolutionary Development Groups.

1. The present training camp at Vung Tau is producing approximately eighty 59-man RD groups every fifteen weeks. The Montagnard school has a capacity of 13 teams in the same period. This program aims at insertion of 5500 trained men (93 teams) into their village areas every fifteen weeks, or, in terms of three and one-half such cycles per year, our current input is approximately 325 59-man teams.

2. A breakdown of team-functions demonstrates clearly the impact this program should have on the Communist organization in the village areas. Each team breaks down into the following components:

1. One 33-man PAT (People's Action Team) plus one leader. Role: Defense, Ideological Action, General Assistance to Village, Organization of Village Self-defense.
2. Three 6-man teams, plus leader. Roles: Administrative, Economic and Social Welfare Assistance in reconstruction and reorganization of village.
3. One overall leader, with one Psywar assistant, one Intelligence assistant, and three medics. Role: General direction of team effort, plus specialties indicated.

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

3. Substantial as it is, the present output of these teams is insufficient in that it does not permit us to follow the growing military capability to sweep the VC out of key areas. In other words, the expanding military capacity to clear terrain is increasingly outrunning our ability to insert teams to hold the areas swept. For this reason we need a rapid expansion of our capacity to produce teams through establishment of another training center. On completion of such a center, as we envisage it today, our training rate would rise from the present Vung Tau annual rate of approximately 340 groups to approximately 581 groups. This, added to an envisaged Montagnard school output of eighty-odd teams per year, would achieve an insertion rate of some 660 teams. In terms of manpower this would mean roughly 39,000 trained personnel, per year, as compared to the present level of approximately 19,000 trained personnel. I would like to reach the 39,000 rate by the end of calendar 1966, which I believe possible on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. That instructor quality can be maintained despite expansion in numbers;
2. That manpower required can be obtained, and that COMUSMACV will join in an effort to obtain release of necessary manpower from Popular Forces or other organizations with necessary draft credit for service in RD groups;
3. That CAS will supervise and control construction and planning; and that required GVN action and USG support (as outlined in Attachment A) will be available at an early date;
4. That the program can be protected from adverse effects of political changes in SVN.

The choice of CAS as the supervisory, control and planning agency is based on the urgency of the matter and the fact of experience gained by CAS in the development of the Vung Tau center.

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-3-

The same urgency requires that we have access to other agency resources and personnel as needed, especially those of DOD and AID.

Nothing in this memorandum should be construed as altering either the need for AID cover to the extent possible in this project, nor the planning for eventual responsibility of AID discussed in my memorandum to Mr. Mann and Mr. Jorgensen dated March 24, 1966 (copy attached).

(SECRET) | I propose that we commence an effort immediately to obtain agreement in principle to the points outlined, on your initiative in Washington as regards the necessary U.S. actions, and on mine in Saigon with respect to required GVN action; and that we proceed to implement as rapidly as such agreement in principle makes possible. I would not, for example, hold up the construction project until we achieve draft credit, but would continue to work on the latter aspect while the remainder of the project goes forward.

Attachments:

- A. Outline of Required USG Support.
- B. Outline of Required GVN Action.

cc: The Ambassador
General Westmoreland
Mr. Mann
Mr. Jorgensen

DEP:WJPorter:let

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ATTACHMENT A

USG SUPPORT REQUIRED FOR EXPANSION OF
RD TRAINING FACILITIES IN VIET-NAM

1. CAS TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPERVISION, PLANNING AND CONTROL OF PROJECT. EMERGENCY TRANSFER OF AID FUNDS IF NECESSARY.
2. USG AGENCIES TO MAKE AVAILABLE AS NECESSARY, AND ON PRIORITY BASIS TO CAS, PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL REQUIRED, INCLUDING SEABEE UNIT AND SHIPPING FACILITIES.
3. COMUSMACV ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING RELEASE OF NECESSARY MANPOWER FROM POPULAR FORCES AND OTHER SOURCES; AND COMUSMACV ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING DRAFT CREDIT FOR SERVICE IN RD GROUPS.

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ATTACHMENT B

GVN ACTION REQUIRED FOR EXPANSION OF
RD TRAINING FACILITIES IN VIET-NAM

1. ACCEPT CONCEPT OF EXPANSION.
2. MAKE SITE AVAILABLE.
3. DESIGNATE REQUIRED PERSONNEL FOR SUPPORT AND LIAISON PURPOSES.
4. MAKE MANPOWER AVAILABLE.
5. ENSURE PROGRAM WILL NOT BE ENDANGERED BY DRAFT.

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